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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [SMIG](#) [RO](#) [AS](#) [CA](#) [SW](#) [UNHCR](#)

SUBJECT: UNHCR EXCOM #6: BILATERALS COVER RESETTLEMENT AND RELATED ISSUES

REF: A. GENEVA 2483

[1](#)B. GENEVA 2465

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: In bilateral meetings with delegations from Romania, Canada, Sweden and Australia on the margins of the October 3-7 meeting of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the US Delegation discussed modalities for increasing capacity of UNHCR's resettlement office and the number of cases it refers. They also explored perspectives on the developing "cluster approach" to Internally Displaced Person (IDP) populations. Head of Delegation (HOD) Rich Greene, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, also took the opportunity to personally press his counterparts for support on the Red Cross Emblem and other sensitive issues, including resettlement of Uighurs and development of a Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) for Bhutanese refugees. Interlocutors showed ample common ground on most issues. End summary.

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Romania
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[1](#)2. (U) Head of Delegation Florin Sandu, Secretary of State for the Ministry of Interior, thanked the U.S. for supporting Romania's efforts to combat organized crime and human trafficking. A/AS Greene said that the USG also wished to express thanks to Romania for its humanitarian response in providing an evacuation point for some 450 Uzbek refugees who had been evacuated from Kyrgyzstan in July. Greene emphasized the U.S. commitment to process the cases under the U.S. refugee resettlement program as soon as they were referred to us by UNHCR. He noted that current projections by UNHCR suggest that about half the total caseload will be referred to the U.S., and that departures for the U.S. could begin by late November. He added that other resettlement states, such as Canada and Australia, were also committed to resettling the Uzbeks. Sandu noted that Romania had endeavored to establish security and services which created the "necessary conditions" for resettlement processing. A/AS Greene reiterated the U.S. Administration's appreciation for all that Romania had done thus far.

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Canada
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[1](#)3. (U) Malcolm Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister for Strategic Policy, Citizenship and Immigration, led a Canadian Delegation which included representatives of Canada's Global Affairs and development agencies. Brown reiterated his Government's support for UNHCR restructuring its senior management to include an Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, and for raising the stature of the resettlement office as well. However, he expressed concern that there remained some very real organizational and management issues on which he did not detect "great energy in UNHCR" to address. He noted that the Intergovernmental Consultations on Asylum, Refugee and Migration (IGC) offered the best forum for discussion of traditional migration issues as well as new developments and global trends, and added that by contrast, he had found the report of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) "underwhelming." He also suggested that Canada and the USG look at economies which might come from harmonizing some resettlement activities, such as screening referrals.

[1](#)4. (U) A/AS Greene noted that the evolving concept of "clusters" to act on IDP issues left many funding issues unanswered and seemed to be moving too quickly. Brown replied that Canada has serious reservations about the proposed Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF). Greene then reviewed the U.S. assessment of preliminary steps which could lead to a comprehensive plan of action for Bhutanese refugees (Ref A) and asked for Canada's support of the initiative. Greene also asked Canada to help move the Red Cross emblem issue forward, noting that the parties need to understand that "there is no alternative to going forward." Canada was supportive on both positions.

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Sweden

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15. (U) The Swedish Delegation, led by Secretary for Migration Charlotte Svensson, said that the CERF and IDP cluster lead were very different issues which appeared to be confused in the minds of some delegations. A/AS Greene agreed, noting that agencies such as UNHCR needed to be mindful that accepting IDP responsibility would not automatically bring with it additional resources. Svensson said that Sweden had pledged USD 40 million to the CERF for CY 2006; however, she questioned the rapidity with which the cluster lead concept is being put together, saying Sweden would prefer to "do it right rather than do it fast." A/AS Greene contrasted this with the UK's "start tomorrow" approach and said that the U.S., though supportive of the cluster approach, would prefer a more deliberate pace in rolling it out.

16. (U) Turning to northern Uganda, Svensson said that Sweden is developing an approach which would "separate the political from the humanitarian" issues and permit increased attention to the needs of refugees and IDPs. Svensson offered Swedish support in response to Greene's discussion of developments which could lead to a CPA for Bhutanese refugees, and acknowledged the importance of the Red Cross Emblem issue. However, she could not offer any prospect for Swedish assistance in resettling Uighurs.

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Australia

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17. (U) Peter Hughes, First Assistant Secretary of the Refugee, Humanitarian and International Division of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs led the Australian Delegation. Hughes anticipates a shift in Australia's resettlement program to focus on Asia, particularly Burmese and Bhutanese refugees. He expressed interest in the USG's developing program for resettling Tibetans, noting that Australia had been accepting small numbers in a very low-keyed manner for several years. Greene summarized his talks with UNHCR and several governments on the possibility of a solution evolving for Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. Hughes said that Australia also sees a window of opportunity for resolving the long-standing impasse.

18. (U) On UNHCR management, Hughes noted that UNHCR lacks organizational discipline in staffing hardship posts and needs to adapt more flexible Human Resource rules, including provisions to hire contract staff when needed. He said that Australia believed UNHCR needed to raise the profile of the resettlement program as it still cannot process enough cases to fill all available slots. Greene noted that resettlement states are increasingly pressed to provide direct funding to UNHCR in order to develop referrals of a specific population in need. Australian and U.S. NGO representatives offered their potential to reinforce UNHCR in preparing cases for referral to resettlement states.

19. (U) Turning to IDPs, Greene said that resources are at the heart of the issue and that UNHCR would not be able to respond to a lead role in any cluster with its current staffing and funding. A member of the Australian delegation noted that two-three years back, the subject of IDPs had not been raised, but that it currently was at the heart of discussions. He seconded concerns that responsibilities were being parceled out before funding issues were addressed. Cassel